

Support for Direct Flights between Los Angeles and Cuba

In December 2014, President Barack Obama reestablished diplomatic relations and announced a new direction in the relationship between the United States and Cuba. In July 2015, the U.S. Embassy reopened in Havana for the first time since President Dwight Eisenhower severed relations in 1961. Beginning in January 2015 and continuing again in September 2015, the U.S. Treasury and Commerce Department updated the Cuba sanctions regulations to allow for more economic opportunity to emerge through travel, telecommunications and internet, remittances, and Cuban business operations.

In October, nine governors, including California Governor Jerry Brown, signed a letter calling on Congress to lift the embargo. That same month, the U.S. Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker visited the island affirming, “we want to help all Cubans plug into the global economy and enjoy a higher standard of living, while also giving the people of the United States an opportunity to learn about Cuba and develop relationships with the people of an island that is only 90 miles away from our shores.”

While the President has called on Congress to repeal the embargo entirely, members of Congress are proposing changes to current Cuba policies in ways that do benefit the United States. Industry representatives from the agricultural sector, hotel,

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MOTION BY CHAIR HILDA L. SOLIS
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hospitality, and tourism have organized delegations to the island. Since July, Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson embarked on the first in a series of State and regional level trade missions to the island. Representatives from Illinois and Ohio have each showcased their local economy and its ability to benefit from this emerging economic partnership.

Here in Los Angeles County, we seek to celebrate our own Cuban American community and heritage and are inspired by the chance to expand our efforts to support the people of Cuba as well as explore opportunities for local businesses to develop relationships in Cuba. On Saturday, December 12, 2015, American Airlines operated its first nonstop flight, sold by Cuba Travel Services, Inc., from Los Angeles International Airport.

I THEREFORE MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS proclaim support for President Barack Obama's reestablishment of United States Cuba diplomatic relations and praise the significance of this week's launch of direct flights between Los Angeles and Cuba.

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